

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE



STITCHING NELSON'S SPIRIT



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**MSA
LIVE 24**

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Partners

In-Situ is an organization based in Pendle, Lancashire, UK, that focuses on creating immersive, site-specific art experiences. They specialize in producing unique and innovative projects that engage with local communities and landscapes.

Their work often involves collaboration with artists, performers, and local residents to create site-responsive performances, installations, and events. They aim to explore themes such as heritage, environment, and social issues through their artistic endeavors.

A town deal funded programme called 'This is Nelson', supported artists in residency to identify a number of unused sites with potential for development around the town centre. In-Situ's aim is to transform this space as one for people in the town to meet, spend time and have fun.

We would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to work with our collaborators, In-Situ, and for their guidance and support throughout the project.

Introduction

Stitching Nelson's Spirit

Stitching Nelson's Spirit is a collaborative place-making project, that aims to connect Nelson's underused spaces through lightweight interventions.

With sensitivity to regeneration in semi-rural towns such as Nelson, the project adopts a situated proposal in relation to the town's tangible heritage evolved from the industrial revolution- a pivotal era of growth for the town.

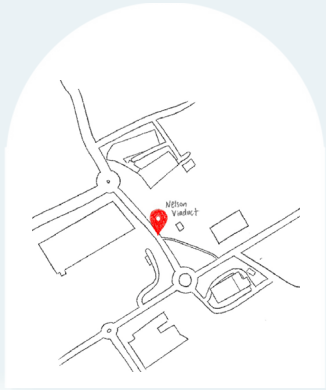
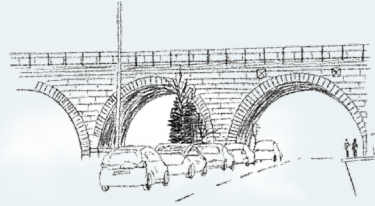
A red guiding line aims to stitch together Nelson's inactive spaces as one, with the aim to develop in a wider context to provide a series of threads throughout the town. Ultimately, the project aspires to encourage exploration, interaction, and appreciation of Nelson's past and present.

An aim to re-imagine Nelson's lost viaduct through a lightweight urban intervention, allows the opportunity for incidental play, performance, and exhibitions that are organised by In-Situ, and other community groups within the town, making an accessible and safe place for all.

The project was developed through a collaborative approach between students of various backgrounds, as well as with our collaborator In-Situ. The adoption of participatory design principles throughout the process, allowed ideas to develop whilst remaining feasible in its inception.

Site visit

The MArch students visited Nelson in February, for a walking visit of the town centre. Guided by Calum from In-Situ, the group explored Nelson's lost and inactive spaces



Initial Observations

Prior to visiting the site, we explored the town centre and its underused spaces identified by In-Situ. These ranged from paved thoroughfares, small green spaces at Nelson train station, as well as the proposed site-Nelson Viaduct.

Upon arrival at Nelson Viaduct, the group collected photographs, sketched, and made initial observations to bring forward throughout the project.

Spontaneous conversations with residents highlighted the need for interventions within the town, to re-activate the streets and public realm, wherein Nelson Viaduct had to opportunity to accommodate this, and more!



Site analysis

A group assessment and analysis of the site was undertaken to understand and learn from the site.

This acted as a starting point for design proposals, most notably recognising desire paths of travel from residential to town centre areas.

Scan the QR code to view site analysis development and processes



Key

- Sub station
- Commercial
- Rail movement
- Vehicular movement
- Office/ GF retail
- Residential
- Retail
- Sun path



Workshops

Site findings and heritage analysis

Desktop research and exploration sought to uncover areas of interest that would inform the later design proposals within the project. Conducted between groups, research surrounding the landscape, tangible and intangible heritage of the area was uncovered.

Utilising cost effective and recycled materials, such as fabrics and printed images, the collage aimed to communicate visions of 'past and future Nelson', whereby the industrial heritage of the cotton mills and textile industry was highlighted, as well as future aspirations for a sustainable Nelson.



Gathering and researching



Cutting and shaping



Collage assembly



Scan the QR code to view the tapestry workings by the group

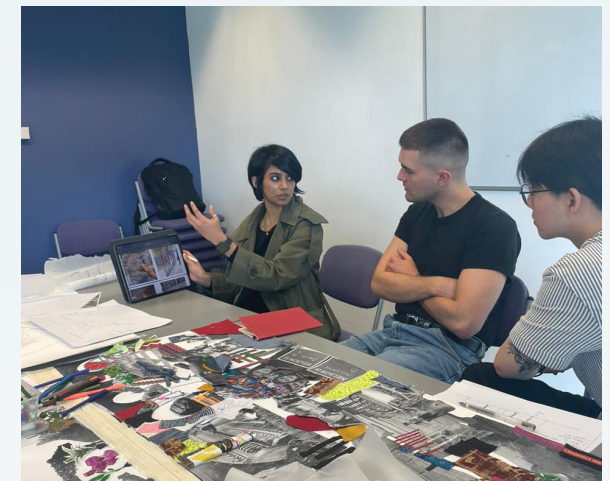
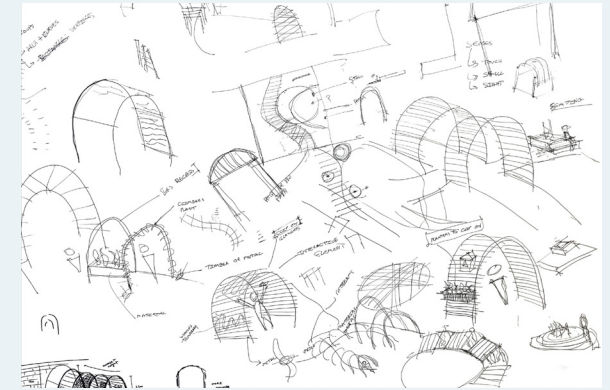


Interim review

Collaboration

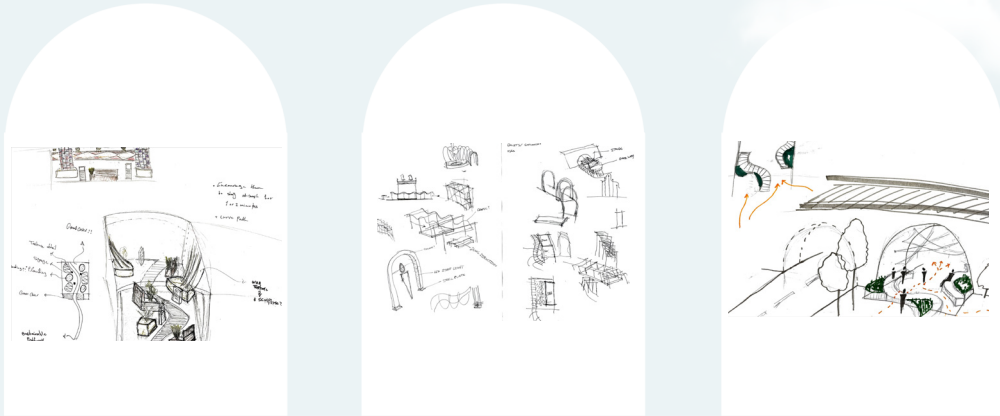
By the end of the first action week, we met with Calum, our collaborator from In-Situ for an interim review. Following introductions from the group, the session began with a brief presentation of our site analysis and research, which later facilitated a discussion on our initial design concepts and thoughts. Our initial design concepts were varied amongst the group, and consisted of arched pavilions, interactive weaving processes, and light installations- all of which were well received!

The review highlighted the value of collaboration, and participatory design methods, as Calum's insight aided in developing the final design iterations. Themes were uncovered during the process, of which the group did not consider prior to Calum's input. Key themes addressed were use, materiality, security, exits and entrances.



Design Concept

Initial thoughts

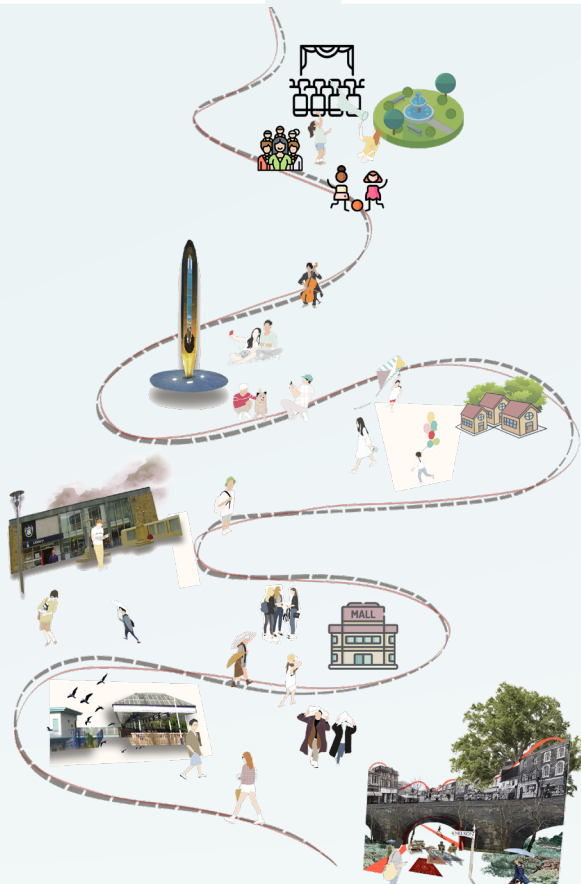


Nelson Threads

Stitching Nelson's Spirit

The outline concept for the proposal aims to connect the key sites within Nelson, and create a sense of continuity. A guided pathway established by a bold red line, that pays homage to the lesser known name of 'Red Nelson'.

The name given to town had evolved through its strong support for the Labour party following the formation of Nelson's Weaver Association and a strong trade union tradition in the town. The acknowledgement of Nelson's historical and social roots encourages residents to utilise the space.



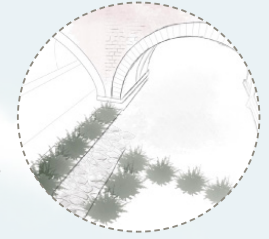
Materiality

Sustainable approaches



Planting species comprise of;

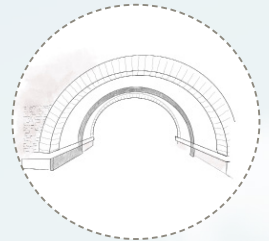
- Spirica Japonica
- Sarococca Hookeriana
- Canary Island Ivy
- Monch, Leopards Bane
- Golden Garlic
- Begonia Yellow & Pink



Recycled composite timber provides a durable and sustainable alternative to hardwood timber



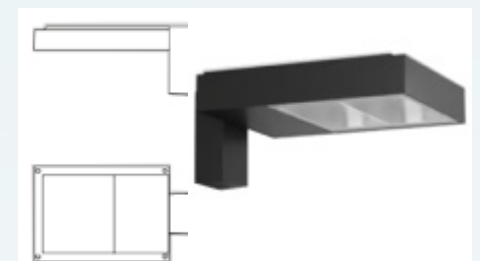
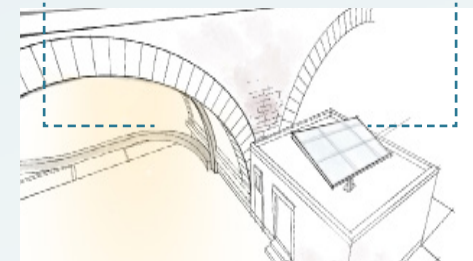
Red PPC aluminium acts as a durable and long lasting material, with the potential for recycling and re-use at the end of its life span



Security and Surveillance

Lighting

Solar Panel



Solar-Powered LED Lights:

With sustainability as a priority, a combination of solar panels with LED are proposed. Solar-powered LED lights are highly efficient and minimize environmental impact and take advantage of the south facing exposure to the south

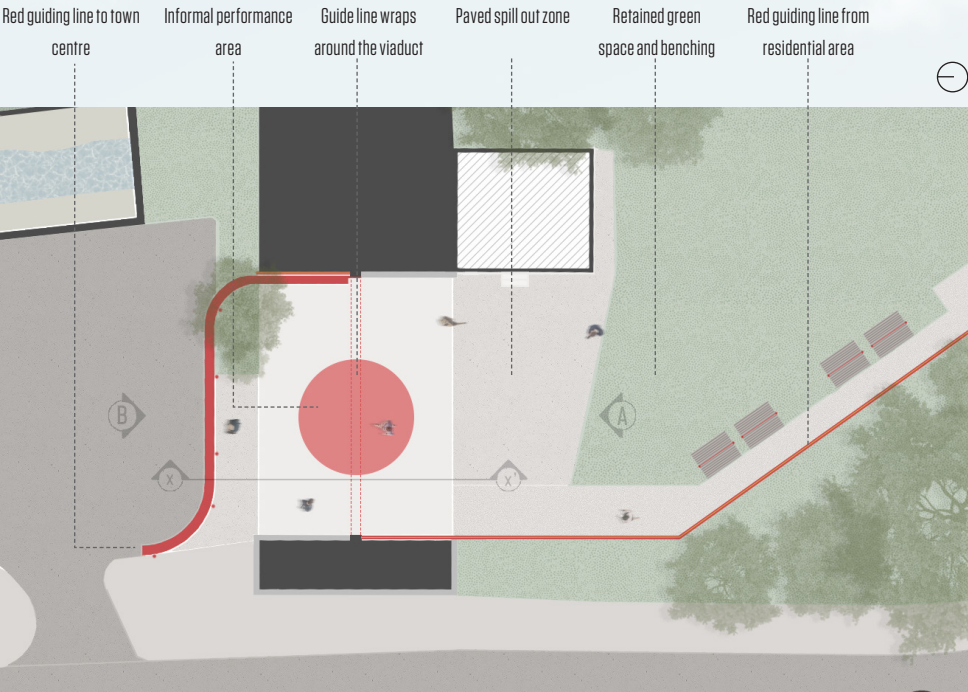
BEGA Lighting

Additional lighting to ensure a bright and safe space has been proposed.

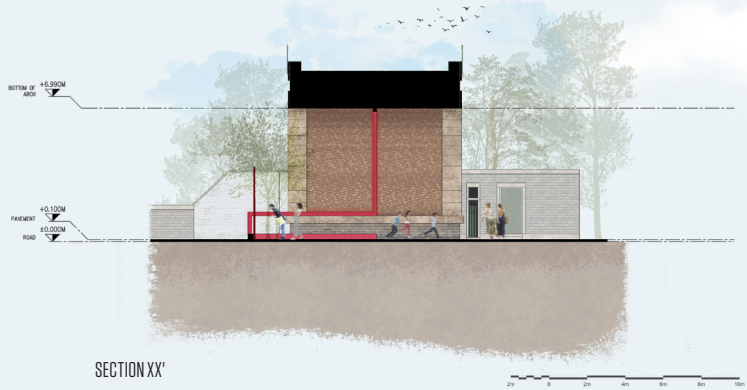
BEGA BugSaver provides soft, warm tones of lighting so as not to disturb surrounding wildlife and species.

Design Proposal

Narrative Collage

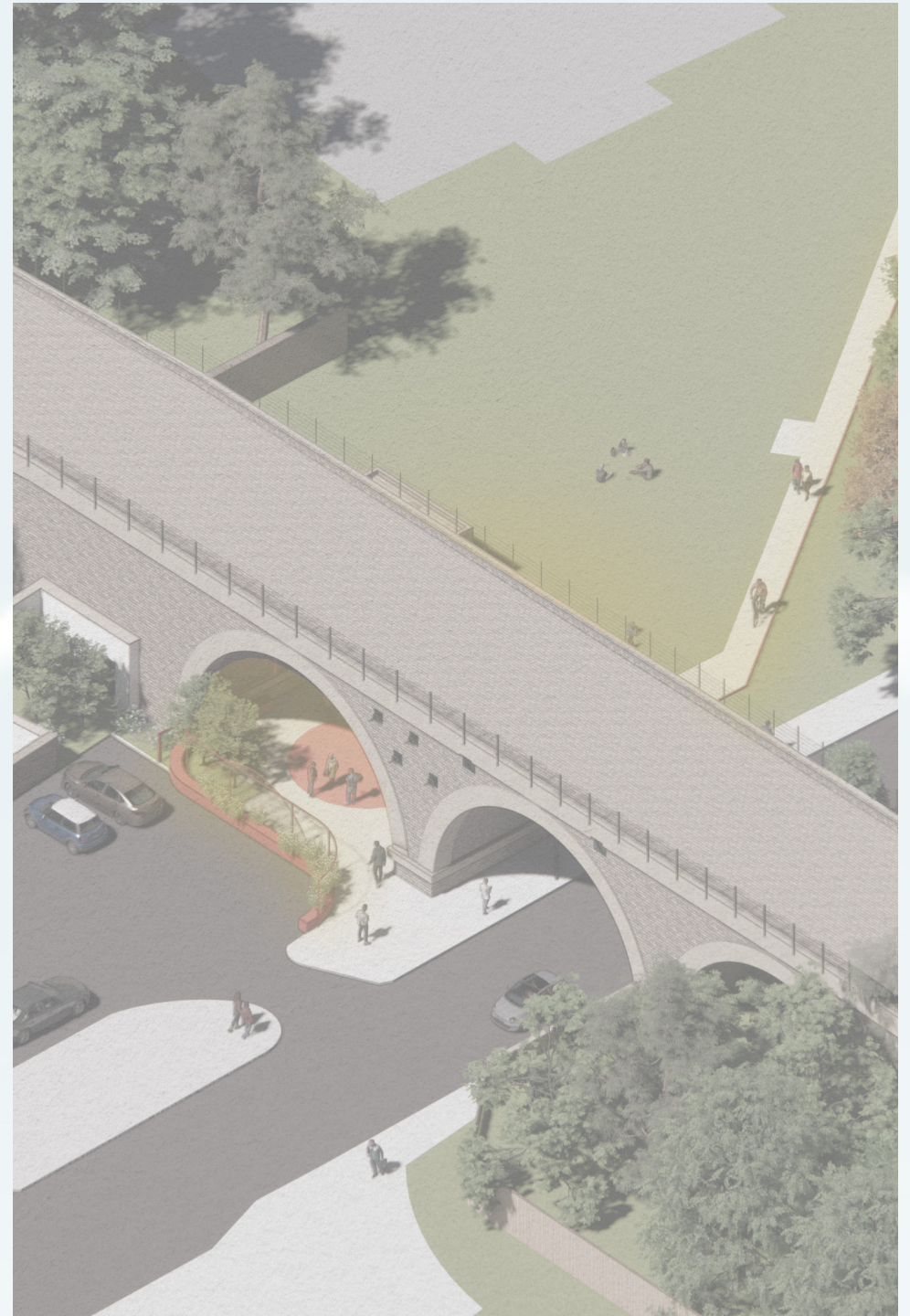
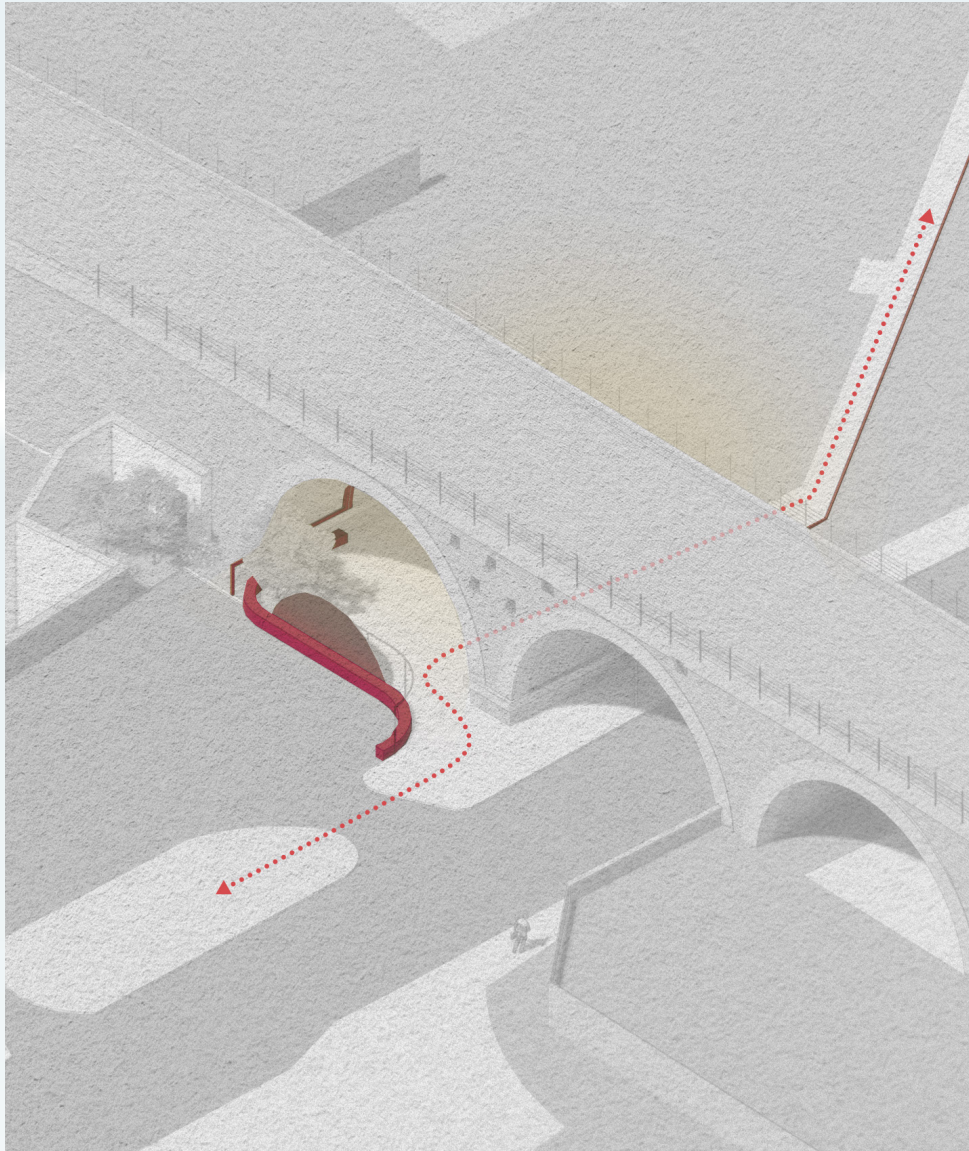


Section and Elevations



Function

A red dotted line illustrates the act of a thoroughfare through the space, that provides a way past any designated activity happening underneath the viaduct without creating a disturbance to either types of users/ visitors at any one time.

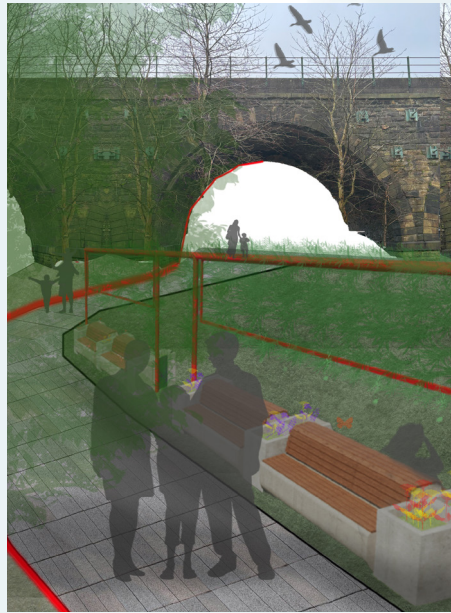


Visualisations

Collage views

In continuing the medium of collage, visuals of the proposal illustrate the concept of stitching together Nelson's inactive spaces by guiding residents through colourful threads.

Collages created by undergraduate students added life and vibrancy to the proposals, showcasing the potential uses of the space, as one to either spend time, perform or pass through.

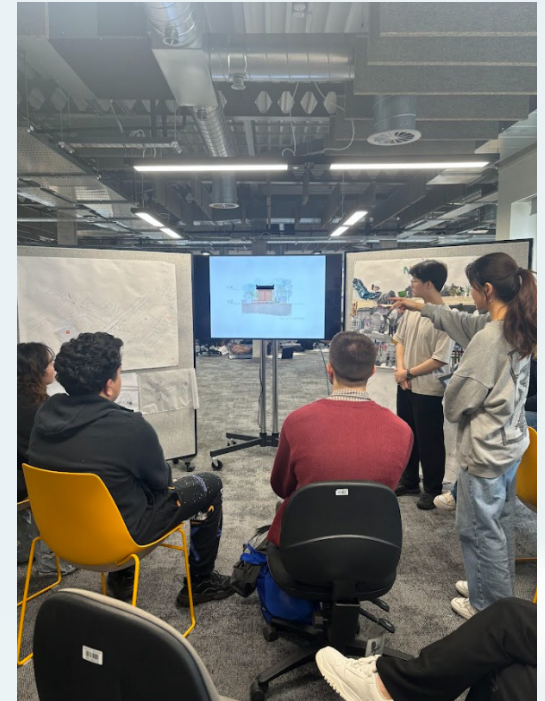


Final Presentation

After our interim review with Calum, we were keen to share our final proposal and hear his thoughts- all of which were positive!

A short presentation showcased our site analysis, concepts, and final design outputs consisting of plans, sections, elevations, and visualisations.

All students engaged in the presentation, sharing their individual pieces of work and thoughts. The session was followed by a short Q&A to clarify any remaining queries surrounding the proposal. Material sourcing, technical details, and reflective views were considered, and was a valuable reflection to the final outputs.



Reflections

After a busy 2 weeks of sketching, drafting and collaborating, we were delighted to have a final output to visualise all of our thoughts as one piece.

The project highlighted the value of collaboration and different approaches to designing. BA and MA students exchanged tips and tricks while learning new skills, as well as meeting other students within MSA.

We would also like to express our appreciation for our collaborator Calum, who accommodated our research and strongly engaged with us throughout!



ABOUT

Each year the MSA LIVE programme unites Masters Architecture year 1 and Masters of Architecture & Adaptive Resuse students with those in BA foundation, year 1 and year 2 and Masters Landscape Architecture 1 in mixed-year teams to undertake live projects with external partners to create social impact.

LIVE PROJECTS

All MSA LIVE projects are live. A live project is where an educational organisation and an external partner develop a brief, timescale, and outcome for their mutual benefit.

SOCIAL IMPACT

All MSA LIVE projects are for community benefit or have social impact. Social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of a community. Our agendas are set by our external collaborators.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

MSA LIVE projects work with many organisations: charities, community groups, social enterprises, community interest companies, researchers, practitioners and educators.

STUDENT-LED

Our MSA masters students take the lead in the project conception, brief development, delivery and co-ordination of a small project. Other cohorts joined for an eventful 2 weeks of activities at the end of the academic year.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Working in teams within and across year groups and courses; MSA students participate in peer to peer learning. In addition, collaborators, participants and students engage in the transfer of tangible and intellectual property, expertise, learning and skills.

LARGE SCALE

This year approximately 600 students from 6 cohorts in MSA have worked on 40 projects with partners.

QUESTIONS

For questions about MSA LIVE please contact the MSA LIVE team:

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BLOG

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